DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 430 883 SO 030 609

TITLE	Colorado Model Content Standards: Visual Arts.
INSTITUTION	Colorado State Dept. of Education, Denver.
PUB DATE	1997-11-13
NOTE	17p.; For additional Colorado Model Content Standards, see SO 030 607-610.
AVAILABLE FROM	Colorado State Department of Education, 201 East Colfax Avenue, Denver, CO 80203.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Standards; Aesthetic Education; *Art Education; *Creativity; Elementary Secondary Education; *Public Schools; *State Standards; Student Development; Student Educational Objectives; *Visual Arts
IDENTIFIERS	*Colorado

ABSTRACT

This Colorado state visual arts content standards guide is based on the idea that visual arts education benefits the student because it cultivates the whole person, gradually building many kinds of literacy while developing intuition, reasoning, imagination, and dexterity into unique forms of expression and communication. Students develop an understanding of each visual arts discipline and the knowledge of the skills that enliven them. Standards provide a positive and substantive framework for those who teach young people why and how the visual arts are valuable to them individually and as participants in a shared culture. The five content standards for the visual arts are : (1) to recognize and use the visual arts as a form of communication; (2) to know and apply elements of art, principles of design, and sensory and expressive features of visual arts; (3) to know and apply visual arts materials, tools, techniques, and processes; (4) to relate the visual arts to various historical and cultural traditions; and (5) to analyze and evaluate the characteristics, merits, and meaning of works of art. Each standard presents a rationale and lists specific educational objectives for grades K-4, grades 5-8, and grades 9-12. The guide also contains a glossary of terms. (BT)

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INTRODUCTION

Colorado Model Content Standards for Visual Arts

In developing the Visual Arts Model Content Standards for all students, the task force followed the definition of a standard, set forth as follows, by the State of Colorado:

"Standards are statements of the academic content each student is expected to learn; they describe what students should know and be able to do. Content standards focus the education system on common, well-defined goals. They ensure rigorous academic content is being taught and they raise expectations for all students.

"Content standards are not curriculum. Decisions regarding local curriculum, teaching materials, and instructional approaches will continue to be made by locally elected school boards."

The visual arts are one of humanity's deepest rivers of continuity. They connect each new generation to those which have gone before. Students need to study the visual arts to enable them to make these connections and to express the otherwise inexpressible.

Visual arts education benefits the student because it cultivates the whole person, gradually building many kinds of literacy while developing intuition, reasoning, imagination, and dexterity into unique forms of expression and communication. If arts education is to serve its proper function, each student must develop an understanding of such questions as these:

What are the visual arts?

Why are the visual arts important to me and my society?

How do artists work, and what tools do they use?

How do traditional, popular, and folk art forms influence one another?

As all students seek the answers to these questions, they develop an understanding of the essence of each visual arts discipline, and of the knowledge and skills that enliven them. The content and the interrelatedness of the standards, especially, go a long way toward producing such understanding. But meeting the standards cannot, and should not, imply that every student will acquire a particular set of artistic values. Ultimately, students are responsible for their own artistic values. Standards provide a positive and substantive framework for those who teach young people why and how the visual arts are valuable to them as persons and as participants in a shared culture.

The affirmations below describe what happens when the standards, students, and their teachers come together. These expectations draw connections among the arts, the lives of students, and the world at large:

- The visual arts have both intrinsic and instrumental value; that is, they have worth in and of themselves and can also be used to achieve a multitude of purposes (for example, to present issues and ideas, to teach or persuade, to entertain, to design, plan, and beautify).

- The visual arts are a way of knowing. Students grow in their ability to comprehend their world when they learn the arts. As they create visual works of art, they learn how to express themselves and how to communicate with others.

- The visual arts provide forms of nonverbal communication that strengthen the presentation of ideas and emotions.

- The visual arts play a valued role in shaping cultures and building civilizations.

- The visual arts significantly contribute to creating understanding among the people of diverse ethnic cultures and civilizations.

- The visual arts have value and significance for daily life. They provide personal fulfillment, whether in vocational settings, avocational pursuits, or leisure.

- Lifelong participation in the visual arts is a valuable part of a life fully lived.

- Appreciating the visual arts means understanding the interactions among the various professions and roles involved in creating works of art.

- Openness, respect for work, and contemplation when participating in the visual arts as an observer are personal attributes that enhance enjoyment.

- The visual arts provide essential opportunities to explore connections among all disciplines. All content areas, while unique, share many common ideas, themes, and terms. Skills developed in the visual arts enhance learning in all content areas and require the synthesis* of ideas and elements across disciplinary boundaries. At the same time, knowledge and skills in other disciplines deepen understanding of the visual arts.

- The modes of thinking and methods of the visual arts disciplines can be used to illuminate learning tasks in other disciplines that require creative solutions.

- Attributes such as self-discipline, the collaborative spirit, and perseverance necessary to the visual arts, transfer to other aspects of life.

- Appreciation for folk arts and their influence on other visual arts deepens respect for one's own community and the communities of others.

* A glossary of terms can be found on pages 13 and 14 of this document.

As students work at increasing their understanding of the promises and challenges presented by the visual arts, they are preparing to make their own contributions to the nation's storehouse of culture. As all students attain these standards, the citizenry will become better educated. Helping every Colorado student to meet these standards is among the best possible investment in the future of our children, our country, and our civilization.

Colorado Model Content Standards

VISUAL ARTS*

1. Students recognize and use the visual arts as a form of communication.

2. Students know and apply elements of art*, principles of design*, and sensory* and expressive* features of visual arts.

3. Students know and apply visual arts materials*, tools*, techniques*, and processes*.

4. Students relate the visual arts to various historical* and cultural* traditions.

5. Students analyze and evaluate the characteristics, merits, and meaning of works of art.

* A glossary of terms can be found on pages 13 and 14 of this document.

STANDARD 1: Students recognize and use the visual arts as a form of communication.

RATIONALE

Art is a universal language that encompasses all forms of communication to express a variety of viewpoints and ideas. Success in the age of information requires that students sharpen their observation and critical thinking skills, while cultivating visual literacy and developing a repertoire for self-expression.*

Grade K-4

In grades K-4, what students know and are able to do includes

- identifying visual images*, themes, and ideas for works of art;
- selecting and using visual images, themes, and ideas to communicate meaning; and
- comparing the use of visual images and ideas.

Grade 5-8

As students in grades 5-8 extend their knowledge, what they know and are able to do includes

- identifying and discussing how and why visual images, themes, and ideas communicate;
- selecting, organizing, and employing visual images, themes, and ideas in works of art to express an intended meaning; and
- evaluating meaning and communication in works of art.

Grade 9-12

As students in grades 9-12 extend their knowledge, what they know and are able to do includes

- interpreting and distinguishing intended meanings of visual images, themes, and ideas in works of art;
- researching and synthesizing visual images, themes, and ideas to create works of art which reflect personal experiences and intended meanings; and
- evaluating and defending the use of visual images, themes, and ideas to communicate intended meanings.

STANDARD 2: Students know and apply elements of art, principles of design, and sensory and expressive features of visual arts.

RATIONALE

The discipline of art requires the use of design, problem solving, and invention. Elements of art, principles of design, and sensory and expressive features are the building blocks that cohesively organize a work of art. All students should know and be able to apply a variety of methods and strategies to solve visual arts problems. Students increase their knowledge as they evaluate works of art and judge the effective use of these components.

Grades K-4

In grades K-4, what students know and are able to do includes

- identifying elements of art and principles of design in works of art; and
- applying elements of art and principles of design to create works of art.

Grade 5-8

As students in grades 5-8 extend their knowledge, what they know and are able to do includes

- describing and discussing characteristics of elements of art, principles of design, and styles* of art;
- using elements of art, principles of design, and styles of art to communicate ideas and experiences; and
- analyzing and evaluating the use of elements of art, principles of design, and styles of art that express ideas and experiences.

Grade 9-12

As students in grades 9-12 extend their knowledge, what they know and are able to do includes

- comparing and contrasting elements of art, principles of design, sensory and expressive features, and functions of art;
- creating multiple solutions to visual arts problems* by applying elements of art, principles of design, and sensory and expressive features; and
- evaluating the use of elements of art, principles of design, and sensory and expressive features in developing and solving visual arts problems.

STANDARD 3: Students know and apply visual arts materials, tools, techniques, and processes.

RATIONALE

The exploration and application of materials, techniques, and processes are essential to the visual arts. Student experiences with materials, tools, techniques, and processes, in combination with concepts and ideas, result in works of art. The safe and responsible use of materials and tools is essential for environmental and personal safety.

Grades K-4

In grades K-4, what students know and are able to do includes

- identifying and describing different materials, tools, techniques, and processes; and
- using materials, tools, techniques, and processes to make works of art.

Grades 5-8

As students in grades 5-8 extend their knowledge, what they know and are able to do includes

- identifying and experimenting with materials, tools, techniques, and processes;
- selecting and using materials, tools, techniques, and processes that enhance communication of ideas through art; and
- evaluating the selection and use of materials, tools, techniques, and processes.

Grades 9-12

As students in grades 9-12 extend their knowledge, what they know and are able to do includes

- demonstrating skill with a variety of materials, tools, techniques, and processes resulting in the creation of works of art; and
- evaluating the relationship between ideas and materials, tools, techniques, and processes used.

STANDARD 4: Students relate the visual arts to various historical and cultural traditions.

RATIONALE

Art is a powerful force in the everyday lives of people around the world. It is one of humankind's most notable contributions throughout history and within all cultures. When students examine works of art from their own and other cultures, places, and times, they understand the role of the visual arts in shaping cultures and building civilizations. The exploration of art, history, and culture teaches students to understand their own expression in relation to the expressions of others.

Grades K-4
In grades K-4, what students know and are able to do includes
- identifying works of art as belonging to various cultures, times, and places; and
- creating art based on historical and cultural ideas of diverse people.

Grades 5-8
As students in grades 5-8 extend their knowledge, what they know and are able to do includes
- identifying and comparing the characteristics of works of art from various cultures, times, and places;
- creating art based on personal interpretation of various historical and cultural contexts;
- demonstrating how history and culture of various people influence the creation, meaning, and style of works of art.

Grades 9-12
As students in grades 9-12 extend their knowledge, what they know and are able to do includes
- describing the functions, meanings, and significance of works of art within various cultures;
- creating works of art based on comparison and evaluation of various historical and cultural contexts; and
- evaluating, analyzing, and interpreting works of art as related to the history and culture of various people.

STANDARD 5: Students analyze and evaluate the characteristics, merits, and meaning of works of art.

RATIONALE
The study of art develops citizens who make informed critical judgments. Through thoughtful observations, descriptions, and analysis, students gain knowledge about visual communications. Critical analysis and aesthetic inquiry* teach students to define differences among works of art. Students learn to respect their own ideas and artistic expressions and those of others.*

Grades K-4
In grades K-4, what students know and are able to do includes
- observing and describing a variety of works of art, including their own;
- using specific criteria* to analyze works of art; and
- using specific criteria to evaluate works of art.

Grades 5-8

As students in grades 5-8 extend their knowledge, what they know and are able to do includes

- identifying and discussing reasons for creating works of art;
- using methods of critical analysis and aesthetic inquiry; and
- formulating responses to works of art from personal and critical points of view.

Grades 9-12

As students in grades 9-12 extend their knowledge, what they know and are able to do includes

- interpreting meaning in works of art;
- evaluating works of art using critical analysis and aesthetic inquiry; and
- demonstrating the ability to form and defend appropriate judgments.

A Matrix Illustrating Cross-Disciplinary Connections among Colorado Model Content Standards

----------*First Round Areas*---------- -----*Second Round Areas*----

	Geography	History	Mathematics	Reading & Writing	Science	Civics	Foreign Language	Music	Physical Education
Standard 1 Students recognize and use the visual arts as a form of communication	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1, 3, 4	1, 3, 4, 5	1, 5		1, 2	4, 5	1
Standard 2 Students know and apply elements of art, principles of design, and sensory and expressive features	1	1, 3, 4	4	4	1, 2, 3, 5, 6			4, 5	
Standard 3 Students know and apply visual arts materials, tools, techniques, and processes	1	4	4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1, 5	1, 2	5	2
Standard 4 Students relate the visual arts to various historical and cultural traditions	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6		3, 4, 5, 6	1, 3, 6	2, 3	1, 2	5	
Standard 5 Students analyze and evaluate the characteristics, merits, and meanings of works of art	2, 4 5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4 5, 6	1, 4	1, 4, 6	1, 6			4, 5	

GLOSSARY

Aesthetics - A discipline in the visual arts and a branch of philosophy focused on the nature and value of art; pertaining to how we see things and what they mean. Aesthetic theories generally include mimetic, formalist, expressive, instrumental, institutional, and postmodern.

Aesthetic Inquiry - Asking questions about works of art, describing and evaluating the media, processes, and meanings of works of art, and making comparative judgments.

Architecture and Environmental Arts - Urban, interior, and landscape design.

Culture/Cultural - A style of social and artistic expression unique to a particular community of people.

Critical Analysis - A higher level thinking strategy, such as Feldman's model for description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment.

Defend Appropriate Judgments - For example: Picasso was the greatest painter of the 20th century because he invented new ways of seeing.

Design and Communication Arts - Film, television, graphics, illustration, photography, product design, and electronic imagery.

Elements of Art - The components of visual arts such as line, shape, value, texture, color, form, space, and time, etc.

Expressive Features - Components of works of art which affect the emotions, such as anger, sadness, and joy.

Fine Arts - Traditional art forms, such as drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, fibers, jewelry, and photography. This term is often used to refer, collectively, to dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts.

Folk Arts - Art that expresses a cultural connection between ethnic forms and traditions and contemporary life experiences.

Historical - Refers to what is concerned with history; having importance or influence on history.

Interpretation - To find meaning and understanding in a particular way.

Media - Broad categories for grouping works of visual art according to the art materials used, for example, the painting media are: water color, oil, tempera, acrylic, etc.

Materials - Resources used in the creation and study of visual art, such as paint, clay, paper, canvas, film, videotape, watercolors, wood, and plastic.

Multiple Solutions for Visual Arts Problems - Such as designing three different kinds of containers using paper, clay and /or cardboard.

Principles of Design - Characteristics in the visual arts such as repetition, balance, emphasis, harmony, rhythm, contrast, unity, and proportion, etc.

Process - A sequential operation involving a number of methods or techniques, such as the carving process in sculpture, the etching process in printmaking, or the casting process in making jewelry.

Sensory Features - Components of works of art that affect the five physical senses.

Specific Criteria - A means by which judgments can be made, such as analyzing a work of art by assigning it an artistic style such as realism, abstraction, etc.

Style - The artistic character of art movements during specific periods of history. Style also refers to an individual artist's use of media which gives the work an individual character.

Synthesis/Synthesizing - The combination of separate parts or elements to form something new.

Techniques - Specific methods or processes used in making art such as carving wood, developing film, or weaving yarn.

Tools - Instruments and equipment used by students to create and learn about art such as brushes, scissors, cameras, digital technology, etc.

Visual Arts - Creation, expression, or communication based on visual form.

Visual Image - A representation of the form and features of someone or something.

Visual Literacy - The ability to perceive and respond to visual symbols and images, for example: recognizing and understanding the international signs for no smoking or highway rest stops.

Colorado Model Content Standards for Visual Arts

Page Index: Visual Arts Terms and Topics

aesthetics 13
aesthetic inquiry 13
analysis 10, 11, 13
architecture and environmental arts 12
artistic values 3
avocational 4

beautify 4

communication 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14
comparison 10
contemplation 4
connections 3, 4, 12
critical analysis 10, 11, 13
critical thinking skills 7
culture 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 13

description 10, 13
design 4, 6, 8, 12, 13
design and communication arts 13
dexterity 3

elements of art 8, 12
ethnic cultures 4
evaluation/evaluating 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13
expression/expressive 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13
expressive features 8, 12, 13

fine arts 13
folk arts 3, 4, 13

history 9, 10, 13, 14

imagination 3
intended meaning 7
interpretation/interpreting 7, 10, 11, 13
intrinsic 4
intuition 3
invention 8

judgment 10, 11, 13, 14

leisure 4

materials 3, 6, 9, 13
media 13, 14
methods 4, 8, 11, 13, 14

observation 7, 10

perseverance 4
principles of design 6, 8, 12, 13
problem solving 8
process 6, 9, 12, 13, 14

reasoning 3

safe/safety 9
self-discipline 4
sensory features 14
self-expression 7
skill 3, 4, 7, 9
strategy/strategies 8, 13
style 8, 10, 13,14
symbols 14
synthesis/synthesizing 4, 7, 14

techniques 6, 9, 12, 14
themes 4, 7
tools 3, 6, 9, 12, 14

universal language 7

visual images 7
visual literacy 7, 14
vocational 4

VISUAL ARTS REFERENCES

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Colorado Model Content Standards for Visual Arts

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